



September 2011



Jodi Ross
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October 17,
Fall Special Town Meeting
7:30 p.m. Held in the Abbot
School Gymnasium.

October 22,
Town wide white goods
appliance pick up. Pur-
chase stickers for \$30 per
item at the Town Clerk's
Office to have your appli-
ance or metal item removed
from curbside.

October 22,
10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
The Recycling Commission
and the Highway Depart-
ment will conduct brush
chipping for residents only
at the Highway Garage, 28
North Street.
The fee is \$10 per load,
cash only.
Accepted: branches with
maximum dimension 3
inches in diameter and 10
feet in length.
Not Accepted: Commercial
refuse. Building materials
(fences, boards), land clear-
ing material, debris (roots
and bushes, brush mixed
with poison ivy), leaves,
pine needles, and grass
clippings.

Watch Meetings Online

westford
CAT

www.westfordcat.org

Dear Westford Residents,

On August 28th, our town was struck by Hurricane Irene, which had sustained winds in excess of 50MPH, accompanied by significant rainfall, both of which contributed to the downing of approximately 40 trees, most of which fell onto power lines. All town public safety and other related departments met for several days prior to the event ensuring we were ready to service the town for the duration of the storm. The Council on Aging staff went above and beyond contacting seniors to ensure they were prepared and safe during and afterwards. Unfortunately electrical service was interrupted for 3,000 residents, and we worked very hard with National Grid to get power restored as quickly as possible. We will be presenting a report to the Board of Selectmen in October to discuss what was successful and where improvements may be made. A special thank you to all of our public safety personnel, especially Emergency Management, Police, Fire, and Highway, who were out in the height of the storm, risking their lives, to keep our streets clear and our residents safe. While most of us ride out the storm from the safety of our homes, these employees are out traveling the streets, assisting others, and managing the damage from the storm with professionalism, efficiency, and effectiveness.

At the August 31st Board of Selectmen's meeting to discuss the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail parking issues, the board approved the town seeking grant funding to extend the trail approximately ½ mile into Acton, where suitable parking is available. Angus Jennings, Director of Land Use Management, requested time on the Board of Selectmen's agendas in both Carlisle and Acton, as the trail crosses through these towns, and received support from both boards for this expansion. We have submitted an application to the state and hope to hear soon if we are approved for funding. Thank you to all who have been involved in this project, and we will keep you posted as progress continues.

On September 11th a memorial ceremony was held on our town common. Organized by a group of volunteer residents, this event was truly touching, showing our concern and support for all who were directly affected by the tragedy of that day. Thank you again to those residents who volunteered their time to coordinate this sincere event, and to all of you who were able to attend.

The town center crosswalk has been completed after many years of discussion and research. This crosswalk increases the level of pedestrian safety for all who attempt to cross from the Fire Station or J.V. Fletcher Library to the common and back. Thanks to Paul Starratt and the engineering department, for their design and oversight of this project, and to Chip Barrett and the highway staff, for helping with the planning and construction.

Chris McClure, IT Director for the past five years, resigned from the town in early September, after accepting an opportunity with another municipality. I would like to publicly thank Chris for his years of service to the town, and his energy, creativity, and vision that helped bring us into the 21st century, and wish him the best in his new endeavor.

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(Continued from page 1.)

I am saddened to report that Cecilia Ward Healy passed away on September 10th, after serving on the Council of Aging for more than 40 years. She was also a member of the Friends of the Cameron Senior Center and contributed greatly to the town throughout her lifetime. Please join me in extending my sincere condolences to her family. She was an extraordinary woman, and she will be missed by all.

Our fall Special Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 17, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. in the Abbot School Gymnasium. Please mark your calendars for this important event – your voice and your vote are needed. We have 13 articles on our warrant, which is posted on our website. All reports by boards, committees, and staff pertaining to these articles will be available on our website by October 3rd. Next month's newsletter will outline some of the articles we are seeking your action on.

Sincerely,

Jodi Ross



9 / 11 Memorial Bench installation on the Westford Town Common made possible through funds raised by the Westford 9 / 11 Committee.

www.westford.com/911



J. V. Fletcher Library News

Are you curious about eReaders? Would you like to try out one before purchasing one to take on a trip, to accompany you on your business travels, or to purchase as a holiday gift?

On Thursday, September 8, the Library began to circulate two Barnes and Noble Nook Colors and two Amazon Kindles - each one pre-loaded with a mix of fiction and non-fiction bestsellers!

Westford residents and non-resident members of the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc., 18 years and older, are eligible to check-out eReaders. Currently, you may put your name on a waiting-list at the Information Services (Reference) desk where check-out and check-in takes place. A Westford Library card, photo ID, and a signed "Patron eReader Agreement" will be required for check out. Like books and audiobooks, eReaders circulate for three weeks. Please feel free to contact a Reference Librarian at any time with questions you have regarding how to operate the devices, what differentiates them, etc.

As with playaways, audiobooks, and downloadable digital audiobooks, eReaders will find their niche in an institution that is committed to continuing to provide the best possible collections of hardcover and paperback books in all genres and for all ages.

This new state-of-the-art service is brought to you through the generosity of the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc.



www.westfordlibrary.org

Veterans News

Veterans, did you serve in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan? If so, did you receive the Massachusetts' Veterans Bonus? You might be eligible for anywhere from \$100 to \$1,000 for your service. You must have been a resident before you entered the service to qualify.

You can apply online at <http://mass.gov/veterans> or call/email Terry Stader, the Westford Veterans Service Officer at (978) 392-1170, veterans@westfordma.gov. If you are not sure if you received this bonus, you can call the State Treasurer's office at (617) 367-9333 x350.





Water Department News

The Town Manager is currently seeking applications for one alternate member for the Board of Water Commissioners. One Westford resident will be appointed to serve a three-year term on the Board which is responsible for policy-making, and consists of three full-time members and one alternate member. The Board typically meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 5:00 p.m. at 60 Forge Village Road (but sometimes meets on other days). The Alternate Member is required to attend meetings and participate in votes in the absence of one or more regular member(s).

Interested residents should complete a Citizen Activity Application form available online at: <http://data.westfordma.gov/bc> and at the Town Clerk's office at 55 Main Street.

For more information, contact Tina Landry in the Town Manager's office at 978-692-5501.

Engineering Department News

The Engineering Department is pleased to report that the Town Center Sewer System has been fully restored thanks to the collaborative effort of several town departments. Following a complete failure in the electrical wiring that services the pumps for Town Hall, the Police Station, and the Fire Station, electricians from the School Department were able to make timely repairs and improvements to the system. Richie Crocker, Bill Ward, and Roy Philbrick, from the School Department, installed new wiring and a power supply that allows the septic system to function. Without their advice and assistance, the pumps would have needed to operate on emergency generators until arrangements could be made for a private contractor to do the work. Conservatively, I estimate that the town was able to save \$5,000 in private contractor services. Many thanks to all those who made this a successful team effort.

Paul Starratt, P.E.
Town Engineer



Left to Right: Bill Ward, Jeremy Downs, Roy Philbrick, and Paul Starratt team up to repair the system.



New sewer system control panel.



Highway Department News

Training to keep our workers safe

This Summer the Highway Department hosted a NEWWA (New England Water Works Association) OSHA Confined Space safety training class. This one-day course was attended by Highway, Water, and Fire Department personnel.

Highlights of the program included:

- Definitions and characteristics of confined spaces
- Confined space hazards
- Atmospheric testing and monitoring devices
- Physical hazards
- Isolation and lockout/tagout of confined space
- Training and duties of confined space entry team
- Entry permit system
- Working safely in the confined space
- Hands-on practical session
- Team set up of tripod/winch system with fall protection

Benefits of this course include first and foremost, safety for town employees while working in confined space conditions, OSHA requirements 1910.146 compliance, and cost savings to the town by being able to better maintain the town's stormwater infrastructure. Each attendee received Confined Space Entry Certification at the end of the session.



Hands-on session at Highway Department.



Classroom session – Tripod/winch system demo.



Hurricane Irene Response

Highway crews worked throughout the storm clearing closed roadways.



Tree limb narrowly missed landing on town vehicle.



Above and below. Downed tree & wires across Oak Hill Rd.
Photos by resident B. Herzog.



National Grid tree contractor removing limbs from power lines.





Health Department News

Flu Clinic Schedule

The Westford Health Department will sponsor flu clinics on the dates, times and locations listed below. No appointments are necessary. ** Please note that because of limited pediatric vaccine, we request that those under the age of 36 months receive their vaccine from their MD, if possible. All children under 18 years must be accompanied by a parent at all clinics. The State's supply of vaccine has been greatly reduced, so clinics will be held until vaccine is depleted. Please bring insurance information to the clinic, as the town can seek reimbursement from insurance carriers.

Thursday Oct. 20: 12:30-3:30 Senior Citizens/High Risk @ Franco American Club

12:30-1:30 > last names beginning with A-J

1:30-2:30 > last names beginning with K-P

2:30-3:30 > last names beginning with Q-Z

Friday, Oct. 28: 10:00-12:00 @ JV Fletcher Library

Thursday, Nov. 3: 5:00-8:00 p.m. @ Millennium (dependent on vaccine availability)

Friday, Nov. 4: 10:00-12:00 @ JV Fletcher Library (dependent on vaccine availability)

Homebound individuals, who require a home visit, should contact the Health Department at **978-692-5509** to schedule an appointment.

For up-to-date information during the flu season, visit the Health Department website at

www.westfordma.gov/boh

or sign up for our Health Department listserv at

www.westfordma.gov/subscriber

School-based flu clinics *will* be offered again in November to all Westford Public School students. The FluMist nasal spray will be the only form of the vaccine offered for this program. Parents will be notified about the dates, registration process and restrictions through the Westford Board of Health Listserv, via e-mail from the WPS Superintendent's office and through the WPS Billboard listserv. Information will NOT be mailed home. Registration information is available on the Board of Health website and at the Health Department.

The 2011-2012 vaccine provides protection against an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like virus; an A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2)-like virus; and a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus. It will not prevent illness caused by other viruses. It takes up to 2 weeks or more for protection to develop after the vaccine. Protection lasts about a year.

Anyone with an allergy to eggs cannot receive this vaccine.

Annual influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone **6 months of age and older**. Everyone, regardless of prior vaccination with either seasonal or H1N1 vaccine, will need to be revaccinated to be protected this year.

People at Increased Risk for Influenza-Related Complications:

- All children 6 months through 4 years of age.
- All persons > 50 years of age.
- People 6 months - 18 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Women who may be pregnant during influenza season and postpartum women.

People > 6 months of age who have:

- Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, neurologic, hematologic, or metabolic disorders, including diabetes.
- Immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or HIV).
- Any condition (e.g., cognitive dysfunction, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, or other neuromuscular disorders) that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions, or that can increase the risk of aspiration.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives.
- People who are morbidly obese (BMI > 40).



Health Department News (continued)

Mosquito and Tick-Borne Illness

As fall is upon us and outdoor activities and recreational sports increase, we encourage families to continue to take precautions to prevent tick and mosquito borne illness. The peak time for exposure to West Nile Virus and Lyme disease extends through the fall.

Protect your family from mosquito bites:

- **Avoid Outdoor Activity During Peak Mosquito Hours.**

The hours from dusk to dawn are peak mosquito biting times for many mosquitoes. Take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing during evening and early morning hours -- or consider avoiding outdoor activities during these times.

- **Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites.**

When possible, wear long sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors during peak mosquito activity time.

- **Apply Mosquito Repellent When You Go Outdoors.**

A wide variety of mosquito repellent products are available. The most effective repellents contain **DEET** (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), **Picaridin** (KBR 3023) or **Permethrin**. Always follow the instructions on the product label. DEET and Picaridin products can be used directly on skin and on clothing. Permethrin products can be used on clothing but **not** directly on skin. Oil of lemon eucalyptus has also demonstrated efficacy against mosquito bites, with protection similar to repellents with low concentrations of DEET. Products containing DEET **should not** be used on children less than 2 months of age and should be used in concentrations of **30% or lower** for older children. Apply only as much repellent as needed. Choose a product that will provide sufficient protection for the amount of time that you will be spending outdoors. Saturation does not increase repellent efficacy. Product labels often indicate the length of time that you can expect protection from a product. Keep repellents away from eyes, nostrils and lips: do not inhale or ingest repellents or get them into the eyes. Avoid applying repellents to portions of children's hands that are likely to have contact with eyes or mouth. Never use repellents on wounds or irritated skin. Wash repellent-treated skin after coming indoors.

For more information on mosquito-borne diseases, protecting yourself from mosquito bites, and on safe application of mosquito repellents visit, the MDPH web site on arboviral (mosquito-transmitted) diseases: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/wnv/wnv1.htm>.



Health Department News (continued)

Protect your family and pets from tick bites:

Prevention begins with you!

Follow these tips if you live, work, or spend leisure time in an area likely to have ticks:

- The single most important thing you can do is check yourself for ticks once a day. Favorite places where ticks like to inhabit on your body include areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, and neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears. Remember to check your children and pets, too. Remove any attached tick as soon as possible.
- Stick to main pathways and the center of trails when hiking.
- Wear long sleeved, light colored shirts and long pants tucked into your socks.
- Use repellents that contain DEET on your clothes or exposed skin, or those that contain Permethrin on your clothes.
- Talk to your veterinarian about the best ways to protect your pets and livestock from ticks.

Reduce the number of ticks around your home:

You don't have to be walking in the woods to be bitten by a tick. You can be in your own backyard!

You can reduce the number of ticks around your home by following these tips:

- Keep grass cut short.
- Remove leaf litter and brush from around your home.
- Prune low-lying bushes to let in more sunlight.
- Keep wood piles and bird feeders off the ground and away from your home.
- Keep the plants around stone walls cut short.
- Use a three-foot wide wood chip, mulch or gravel barrier where your lawn meets the woods. Ticks are less likely to cross the barrier into the lawn because they are prone to drying out. It also serves as a reminder that people who cross the barrier into the wooded area may be at higher risk of getting ticks.
- Ask your local nursery about plants to use in your yard that do not attract deer.
- Use deer fencing (for yards 15 acres or more).

If you choose to use a pesticide to reduce the number of ticks on your property, hire a licensed applicator experienced with tick control. Your local landscaper or arborist may be a licensed applicator. In general, good tick control can be achieved with no more than two pesticide applications in any year. When selecting an applicator, ask if they will provide:

- A written pest control plan that includes information on the pesticide to be used.
- Information about non-chemical pest control alternatives.
- Signs to be posted around the property after the application.

For more information on diseases spread by ticks contact the Westford Health Department

(978) 692-5509 or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology and Immunization, (617) 983-6800 or www.mass.gov/dph